

# COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

**March 11, 2004**

Contact: David Marin/Drew Crockett, 202-225-5074 (Davis)  
Tabetha Mueller, 202-225-3741 (Platts)

### **GAO Report: GPRA Provides Foundation for Results-Oriented Government**

**Washington, D.C.** - In a report released today, the General Accounting Office (GAO) has found that management reforms envisioned by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) are beginning to take hold. According to the report, *Results-Oriented Government - GPRA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results* (GAO-04-38), GPRA's requirements have laid the groundwork for improved management, including performance measurement and reporting. GPRA has also begun to facilitate the linking of resources to results, although significant work remains to be done in this area. The Congressional requestors commend GAO for their extensive analysis of this important management reform.

GPRA, passed in 1993, called for Federal agencies to develop long-term strategic plans and yearly performance and accountability reports. It was intended to achieve a firm foundation on which to build a structure of performance management. While it was inspired by a comprehensive vision, GPRA was not intended to be a comprehensive reform in itself.

"GPRA continues to evolve as senior agency leaders better understand the requirements set forth are given tools for its effective implementation. We are seeing progress. Strategic plans are becoming more useful, and managers are becoming more effective at managing for results," said Chairman Todd Platts (R-PA-19) of the Efficiency and Financial Management Subcommittee.

The report finds progress in meeting many of the objectives set forth in GPRA. In 1997, only 76% of federal managers had developed performance measures. By 2003, that number had risen to 89%.

Among the challenges to meeting GPRA's full potential, GAO identifies one area where agencies consistently come up short - program evaluation. GPRA requires

agencies to focus attention on program evaluation as one of six aspects of their strategic plans. Not only have agencies failed to comply with this requirement, the valuable information that stands to be gained from these evaluations is not culled, coordinated, or presented in a useful way.

Two weeks ago, Rep. Platts and Full Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA-11) introduced the Program Assessment and Results Act, or PAR Act. This legislation builds on reforms established in GPRA by requiring the Office of Management and Budget, working with agencies, to assess the performance of all Federal programs at least once every five years. This legislation will address many of the concerns raised in the GAO report.

“I’m encouraged by GAO’s finding that a performance based culture is slowly but surely taking hold across the federal government. Clearly, GPRA has established a solid foundation from which Congress can work. Now, it is important that we take the next step to strengthen GPRA. The best way to do this, I believe, is to require agencies to comprehensively review the performance of their programs. The PAR Act does just that.

“Continued pressure on Congress from the Administration and from the federal bureaucracy to base budget decisions on performance measures will undoubtedly have a longstanding and substantial impact on the way Congress appropriates funds,” said Chairman Davis.

In his statement introducing the PAR Act, Chairman Platts said, “In looking at this legislation we must ask ourselves, do we believe that better understanding how government operates program by program is a good idea? If the answer to that question is yes, and I believe it is, then we should work to ensure that program assessments be required for this and every future administration.”

The GAO report will be the subject of an oversight hearing by the Efficiency and Financial Management Subcommittee on March 31, 2004.

###